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SUBJECT: NORWAY EXPLAINS DECISION TO RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN  
UNITY GOVERNMENT

¶1. (SBU) Summary: On March 19, MFA Political Director Kai Eide briefed the EU/NATO ally countries on the GON decision over the weekend to have direct political contacts with the Palestinian National Unity Government (NUG). He explained that the GON welcomed the NUG because:

- the NUG is taking steps toward complying with international community requirements, as demonstrated by the Mecca Agreement and the NUG platform;
- the NUG is important to ending the inter-Palestinian violence and creating stability in Palestine;
- the NUG provides a broad basis for Abbas to negotiate with Israel.

End Summary

¶2. (SBU) The alternative, Eide said, would be continued violence, a weakened Abbas; and the undercutting of moderate Arab states who were heavily engaged in creating the NUG. Eide commended Abbas for his efforts and explained the GON has been constantly in touch with Abbas throughout the process. The GON sees the Mecca Agreement, the NUG platform and the statements by the Palestinian Prime Minister as containing positive elements. While not ideal, they do provide a foundation from which to move forward. Eide stressed the GON hopes that its action will lead to more moderation by Palestinians and others in the wider region. Eide briefed that the GON will have direct contacts with the NUG based on functional needs, not party affiliation. They look to work closely with the NUG Finance Minister in determining how to move back to normality and end the perversion of the Palestinian economy.<sup>8</sup>

¶3. (SBU) Eide stressed that the GON decision is not a carte blanche. Instead, the GON will assess how the NUG policies and actions comply with the international requirements in particular regarding:

- recognition of Israel;
- renunciation of violence;
- stability in Palestine;
- end to rocket attacks;
- release of the Israeli soldier held captive;
- recognition of previous international laws; and
- political and economic reforms within Palestine.

In regard to the latter, the GON found the Palestinian Prime Minister's emphasis on reform encouraging. Eide

re-emphasized that the GON will be looking for more than just words, and will monitor actions. He pointed out however that the GON had at this point concluded it should build on what has been achieved because the costs of not doing so are very high.

14. (SBU) Eide then briefed on State Secretary Johansen,s ongoing visit to Palestine. Meetings with the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister have already taken place and meetings with Abbas and the Finance Minister are scheduled. At the meetings, Johansen is offering support but also clearly explaining Norway,s expectations for positive action. He has specifically said that the GON will modulate its relationship based on performance. In the meeting with the Prime Minister, Johansen explicitly urged the release of the Israeli soldier and the BBC journalist. At the meeting with the Foreign Minister, Johansen stressed Norway,s interpretation of the Mecca Agreement and the NUG platform as implicitly recognizing previous UN resolutions. The Foreign Minister confirmed that this interpretation was one he shares.

15. (SBU) In a question and answer session that followed, Eide emphasized that the GON will not distinguish between Hamas, Fatah, and Independent Ministers in their contact with the NUG. With the NUG, the GON will meet at political levels. However, with the Hamas party, the GON will continue to meet only at the civil servant level. On the type of financial assistance and mechanism for it, Eide said this would depend on the discussions with the Finance Minister. Responding to questions about Israeli,s reaction (note: Israel was not invited, nor were other non-NATO, non-EU states), Eide said he could not speak to other country,s views but said that the best diplomacy comes when strength is combined with engagement. One without the other will lead to failure, but

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the combination can foster moderation. In response to the DCMs question regarding the Palestinian Prime Minister,s statement that violence will continue, Eide re-emphasized that the GON will modulate its policy based on the behavior of the new government. The GON reads the question of resistance in the Palestinian PM's statement as coming within the context of international norms and charters.  
WHITNEY